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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 002319

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: APPOINTMENT OF NEW U.S. OSCE MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIR

REF: STATE 92194

Classified By: Acting M/C for Political Affairs David Kostelancik for reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) We met with MFA Minsk Group Counselor Yelena Kravchenko September 7 and 8 to discuss reftel announcement. Kravchenko told us Russian Co-Chair Yuri Merzlyakov remains on leave through the end of the week, but looks forward to receiving Ambassador Bradtke's phone call at his dacha. Best times to call are evenings (Moscow time) at : (plus)7 495 634 5816 (dacha land line, preferred number) or on his mobile phone (plus)7 985 766 7604.

¶2. (C) Kravchenko clarified that the Minsk Group Co-Chairs usually speak English with one another and draft all documents in English, given Merzlyakov's fluency in the language as a trained interpreter for English and French (see para 5). However, Armenian President Sargsian spoke only Russian, so meetings including him were generally conducted in Russian.

¶3. (C) Kravchenko noted that French Co-Chair Fassier had written Ambassador Bradtke and Conflicts Advisor Tim Birner letters laying out plans meet in New York or Washington, at Ambassador Bradtke's convenience, after September 20. In addition to getting acquainted, separate meetings of the Co-Chairs with the Armenian and Azerbaijan Foreign Ministers would be possible on the margins of UNGA. The Co-Chairs should also agree upon a visit to the region, possibly starting September 29, Kravchenko said.

¶4. (C) Kravchenko added that President Medvedev currently had no plans for another "2 plus 1" meeting with the Armenian and Azerbaijan Presidents. She held out that the Co-Chairs might propose that Sargsian and Azerbaijan President Aliyev meet on the margins of the upcoming CIS summit in Chisinau in October.

¶5. (C) In return for the announcement of Ambassador Bradtke's nomination, Kravchenko asked that we transmit Merzlyakov's bio to Washington for Ambassador Bradtke's perusal:

Yuri N. Merzlyakov  
Ambassador at Large Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,  
Co-Chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group on Nagorno-Karabakh  
Settlement

Born in 1949 in Moscow. Graduated from Moscow State  
Institute for International Relations in 1971 and the United  
Nations Language Training Course, Moscow, in 1972.

1972-1977 Translator in the United Nations Secretariat, New

York

1977-1979 Student of the Diplomatic Academy, Moscow  
1980-1984 Second Secretary of the USSR Embassy in Burundi,  
Bujumbura  
1984-1987 First Secretary of the USSR Embassy in Tanzania,  
Dar-es-Salam  
1987-1990 Counselor, Chief of Section of the African  
Department of the USSR Foreign Ministry, Moscow  
1990-1993 Minister-Counselor of the Russian Embassy in  
Ethiopia, Addis-Ababa  
1993-1997 Ambassador of the Russian Federation in the  
Republic of Madagascar and in the Federal Islamic Republic of  
the Comores Islands  
1997-2000 Chief of the Working Group on the Caspian Sea,  
Ambassador at Large  
2000-2003 Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of  
the Russian Federation to the Republic of Kazakhstan  
August 2003-present Co-Chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group,  
Ambassador at Large

Foreign languages: English, French, Swahili  
Married, father of an adult daughter

Beyrle